

The Substance of the  
**P E T I T I O N**

Of *Henry Farmer, Ralph Sheldon, Thomas Stoner, John Weedon*, Esqrs; and *Winifred Brooke* Widow, *Papists*, praying to be heard by their Council against the **BILL**, for the Discovery of all Lands and Revenues given to *Popish* Superstitious Uses; and for applying the same to *Greenwich* Hospital.

**T**HAT the pretended Discovery made upon the Petition of *Lewis Girard* and others, is an Inquisition taken at *Wheatley* in *Oxfordshire* the 16th of *October* last, before *John la Pradel*, and other Strangers and Foreigners, on the Oath of one *Nevil*, and other obscure means Persons, whereby without producing any Deed, or a Copy of any Deed, their Estates (which they hold under Marriage Settlements) are found to be given to Superstitious Uses.

That the Commissioners never returned the said Inquisition into the *Petty-Bag-Office* or *Exchequer*, as by Law they ought, so they were deprived of their Traverse, and such Just Means as the Law allowed, to defend their Possessions and Titles; and that they doubt not, but to make it fully appear, that the said Inquisition was found by undue Means, and contrary to all Truth; and that *Girard* and his Accomplices (under pretence of Discovery) are seeking to mend their Broken Fortunes out of their Estates.

*Reasons and Answers offered to the Matters Objected in this*  
**P E T I T I O N.**

1<sup>st</sup>. IT's admitted such an Inquisition was taken before *Pradel* and Three *English* Gentlemen Commissioners, all Strangers in the County, and that the Estates of the Petitioners, with others, were fully proved by several Credible Witnesses (to the great Satisfaction of the Jury) to be given to *Popish* Superstitious Uses, as well by Abstract, and Copys of Deeds, as otherwise by Execution of Conveyances and Deeds of Trust at the Synod, when the Pope's *Nuntio* was in *London*, in the late King *James's* Time: And the Commissioners being all Strangers, is a great Evidence, and a strong Presumption, that the Inquisition was fairly taken, and without any pretence of any ill Practices; and that the Petitioners, or some Friends for them appeared, and made great Interest to stop the finding of the said Inquisition.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Mr. *Girard* being advised, that the further Proceedings upon the said Inquisition was very Hazardous and Expensive, and in all probability he could expect little or no Benefit thereby upon any Tryal, (as the present Laws now stand, in relation to *Popish* Superstitious Uses) was the reason the same was not Filed, nor are the Commissioners enjoined by the Commission, or obliged to return the same. And sure the not Filing thereof, was rather in favour of the Petitioners than a prejudice, and saved them the Charge of Traversing the said Inquisition; and that three or four Gentlemen concerned with Mr. *Girard* in this Prosecution, are Persons of undoubted Characters, and lovers of the Protestant Religion, and their Country and of plentiful Fortunes.

3<sup>dly</sup>, The Inquisition is barely an Inquest of Office, to give the King a Title, so as to ground an Information upon for a Tryal, or to grant the same Petitioners not being in any sort thereby divested of their Freehold; the Estates thereby found in *Oxfordshire*, being of great Value.

4<sup>thly</sup>, By the Report of the Committee, it appeared that Mr. *Girard* not only produced several Witnesses to prove the Allegation of his Petition, besides the said Inquisition and Report; but also then, and now offers (for the greater Solemnity of the Matter) to try the same at the Bar.

5<sup>thly</sup>, This Act, as it is now settled, is a General Law, and does not in the least relate either to *Girard*, or to the Petitioners, or to any particular Persons whatsoever, nor does it divest the Petitioners or any other Person of their Estates, without a legal Tryal, (where they will be fully heard as to their Titles.) And a provision is made for the Prosecutors to give Security, to answer Costs. So the Labouring Oar and Difficulty is upon them: And to avoid all pretences of disquieting the Subject in his Possession, Mr. *Girard* before the said Committee, proposed to go no further back than the late King *James's* Time. So it is plain, this Petition is only put in to obstruct the Passing of the Bill, upon the Close of the Session: And by the Bill the Estates and Interests of all Protestants are saved.

6<sup>thly</sup>, As the present Laws now stand, the *Papists* may be disquieted, and put to Charge and Expence of Suits, and no Provision or Satisfaction for Costs, which this Act has fully provided for, and puts them in a better Condition as to that Matter, than they were in before, and is the fairest offer that ever was made in this Nature, and will be of great Advantage, in strengthening the *Protestant Religion* in this Kingdom.